

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 05227 061422Z

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P R 052124Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8821

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 5227

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, EFIS, EC

SUBJECT: CHARTER OF TWO TUNA VESSELS TO ECUADOREAN FIRM

1. GUTHRIE-CHAPLIN OFFICIAL INFORMAL OF SEPTEMBER 28 INFORMS US THAT NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE (NMFS) MIGHT DISAPPROVE CHARTER OF TWO U.S. REGISTERED TUNA VESSELS TO ECUADOREAN FIRM UNLESS ASSURANCES RECEIVED THAT NMFS REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE PERMITTED ON-THE-SPOT INSPECTIONS FOR COMPLIANCE WITH IATTC REGULATIONS AND QUOTAS. NMFS HAS MADE UNSUCCESSFUL REPRESENTATIONS FOR SUCH ASSURANCES TO GOE EMBASSY WASHINGTON THROUGH THE DEPARTMENT AND DECISION ON CHARTER APPLICATIONS APPARENTLY STILL PENDING.

2. WE ARE SOMEWHAT PUZZLED BY REPORTED CONDITIONS ATTACHED TO PROSPECTIVE CHARTER SINCE ECUADOREAN BASED FIRMS HAVE CHARTERED U.S. VESSELS FOR TUNA FISHING WITHOUT DIFFICULTY IN THE PAST. AT THE MOMENT U.S. TUNA VESSEL LEXINGTON IS UNDER CHARTER TO DEL MONTE, ECUADOR, AND OPERATES YEAR ROUND OUT OF MANTA, LANDING ITS CATCH THERE.

3. DEL MONTE MANAGER IN MANTA HAS INFORMED CONGEN
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PAGE 02 QUITO 05227 061422Z

GUAYAQUIL OFFICER THAT HE COLLABORATES CLOSELY WITH IATTC

REPRESENTATIVE BASED IN MANTA. LATTER IS ECUADOREAN NATIONAL NAMED ANIBAL ORBE. THE LEXINGTON'S CATCH IS REPORTED TO THIS LOCAL IATTC REPRESENTATIVE WITH INFO COPY SENT TO IATTC OFFICES IN SNADIEGO. ACCORDING TO DEL MONTE MANAGER, ORBE HAS FREE ACCESS TO LEXINGTON'S CATCH FOR PURPOSES OF INSPECTIONS.

4. IF DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE THEREFORE INSISTS ON INSPECTIONS FOR IATTC COMPLIANCE AS CONDITION FOR APPROVAL OF CHARTER, IT OCCURS TO US THAT U.S. REGISTERED VESSELS INVOLVED COULD FOLLOW SAME PROCEDURE AS OUTLINED ABOVE THUS OBTAINING NEED FOR NMFS INSPECTIONS.

5. AS PARENTHETICAL COMMENT WE MIGHT ADD THAT, AS FAR AS WE CAN DISCERN, GOE IS WELL DISPOSED TOWARDS IATTC.

ACCORDING TO GOE SUB-SECRETARY FOR FISHERIES, ORIGINAL REASON FOR WITHDRAWING FROM IATTC WAS TO SAVE COSTS OF MEMBERSHIP AND GOE IS NOW IN FACT CONSIDERING REJOINING. MOREOVER, SINCE WITHDRAWING MEMBERSHIP IN 1967, GOE HAS PARTICIPATED IN IATTC IN OBSERVER STATUS.

6. DENIAL OF CHARTER ON BASIS OF U.S. INSISTENCE THAT U.S. INSPECTORS CHECK THESE SHIPS (RATHER THAN USING THE IATTC REPRESENTATIVE IN MANTA) WILL PROBABLY BE INTERPRETED HERE AS AN UNNECESSARY AFFRONT TO THE ECUADOREANS AND AN ADDITIONAL U.S. SANCTION AGAINST ECUADOR -- ONE DESIGNED TO COMPLICATE THE GOE EFFORT TO EXPAND ITS TUNA INDUSTRY. THIS COULD LEAD IN TURN TO UNFORTUNATE GOE COUNTERMEASURES AS THE FALL TUNA SEASON APPROACHES. IT ALSO MIGHT COMPLICATE STARKIST'S EFFORTS TO WIN THE \$20-30 MILLION FISHING COMPLEX BIDDING.

7. IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THE VESSEL CHARTER IN QUESTION BE FAVORABLY RECONSIDERED. BREWSTER

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